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Federal, State, Local Leaders Cut Ribbon on New Coastal Office

*\$13 million, eco-friendly project will improve ADEM services,
add to Mobile's redevelopment of South Broad Street area*

MOBILE, Ala. – Federal, state and local leaders joined officials of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management today to cut the ribbon on ADEM's new field office in Mobile that will allow for more efficient environmental protection services in the coastal region and complement the city's redevelopment of the South Broad Street area.

Construction of the \$13 million, 15,000-square-foot building began in 2022 and was funded in collaboration with the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council (AGCRC). The 10-member AGCRC, which includes Gov. Kay Ivey, local mayors, county commission chairs and other officials, contributed \$7.9 million in settlement money from the 2010 BP oil spill. The Alabama Legislature allocated \$3 million, and ADEM covered the remaining costs.

"This new facility is the result of 13 years of collaboration by a number of parties who united behind the mission of protecting Alabama's coastal areas," ADEM Director Lance LeFleur said. "It really was an earnest team effort, and we are grateful that many of our partners could be with us today in celebrating this important milestone."

Among the leaders who joined LeFleur in marking the opening of the office were the mayors of Mobile, Fairhope, Dauphin Island and Bayou La Batre; Mobile County Commissioner Merceria Ludgood; representatives for U.S. Sens. Tommy Tuberville and Katie Britt and U.S. Rep. Jerry Carl; officials with Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Alabama Port Authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and various environmental organizations and businesses.

The new coastal office will bring under one roof more than 30 ADEM staff who previously worked in two locations in the Mobile area. The new location is closer to area headquarters for the U.S. Coast Guard and the Corps of Engineers, which will enhance cooperation between the various agencies, LeFleur said.

“This will make for more streamlined operations with our nearby partners,” he said. “And the site is more visible and accessible to the public.”

LeFleur noted that an architectural feature of the building, a curved front façade, was designed to produce a changing effect as the sun and shadows move through the day, reflecting the dynamics of the hydrological cycle.

The facility also showcases a number of environmentally friendly features. The parking lot is paved with rubber-modified asphalt produced with recycled old tires. A walking trail will also be made from shredded tires and feature native plants. “Rain Chains” will take water from building’s metal roof to underground cisterns for storage, and a retention pond will help manage stormwater.

An electric vehicle charging station, LED lighting, automatic light switches and design functions that maximize natural lighting also contribute to efficiency.

“Mobile is making a considerable investment in the redevelopment of this section of Broad Street, which is a main link between downtown and the airport,” LeFleur said. “The location of our building contributes to those redevelopment efforts and, we hope, will help make a favorable impression for visitors to Mobile.”

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